

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY ALASKA  
Fort Richardson, Alaska 99505-5000

United States Army Alaska Regulation 215-6

1 December 2000

Morale, Welfare, and Recreation

United States Army Alaska Doctor Mary E. Walker Award

**Summary.** This regulation establishing the United States Army Alaska (USARAK) Doctor Mary E. Walker (DRMEW) Award has been revised. The program recognizes and rewards outstanding USARAK volunteer service. This regulation provides information and administrative instructions about the USARAK DRMEW Award. This regulation has been revised to update the primary office of responsibility.

**Applicability.** This regulation applies to USARAK, units assigned to USARAK, and lodger units.

**Supplementation.** Supplementation of this regulation is prohibited without prior approval from the Director of Plans, Training, Security, and Mobilization, APVR-RPTM.

**Interim changes.** Interim changes to this regulation are not official unless the Director of Information Management authenticates them. Users will destroy interim changes on their expiration dates unless sooner superseded or rescinded.

**Suggested improvements.** This regulation's proponent agency is the Directorate of Plans, Training, Security, and Mobilization. The Directorate of Plans, Training, Security, and Mobilization invites users to send comments and suggested improvements on Department of the Army (DA) Form 2028 (Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms) directly to APVR-RPTM.

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1. Purpose

The DRMEW Award is a reward for Army spouses whose achievements and performance merit special recognition. The DRMEW Award is a means of recognizing those who have contributed significantly to the quality of life for soldiers; exemplifying personal concern for the needs, training, development, and welfare of soldiers; and concern for families of soldiers.

2. References

- a. Required publication. USARAK Regulation 215-2 (United States Army Alaska Sergeant Audie Murphy Club) is cited in paragraph 5.

\*This regulation supersedes United States Army Alaska Regulation 215-6, dated 1 March 1999.

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b. Referenced form. DA Form 2028 (Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms) is cited in the suggested improvements statement.

### **3. Explanation of abbreviations and term**

#### **a. Abbreviations.**

- (1) DA..... Department of the Army
- (2) para ..... paragraph
- (3) Reg..... Regulation
- (4) SAMC ..... Sergeant Audie Murphy Club
- (5) USARAK..... United States Army Alaska

b. Term. Doctor Mary E. Walker. The only woman in United States history to receive the Medal of Honor. She was a humanitarian, devoted to the care and treatment of the sick and wounded during the Civil War, often at the risk of her life. She was a patriot, dedicated, and loyal to her country, serving on a volunteer basis as a field surgeon. Appendix A gives is a brief biography of Doctor Mary E. Walker.

### **4. Eligibility**

Spouses (male and female) of active Army, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve soldiers of all ranks are eligible. All eligible volunteers will have equal eligibility, without consideration of military member's rank or position.

### **5. Administration**

a. The Director of Plans, Training, Security, and Mobilization will exercise overall program administration at the USARAK level.

b. Subordinate commands will have procedures in place to administer the program at the local level within the appropriate command sergeant major's office (do not delegate responsibility to lower levels). Responsibilities include reviewing DRMEW Award packets in conjunction with the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club (SAMC) selection boards each quarter (per USARAK Reg 215-2) as well as the oversight and monitoring of DRMEW Award recipients at their appropriate levels and preparation of the following DRMEW Awards for spouses:

(1) USARAK DRMEW Award, signed by the first general officer and command sergeant major in the chain of command.

(2) Membership medallion.

c. The DRMEW Award is a prestigious award to recognize volunteer service that makes a substantial contribution and has a positive impact on the quality of life for soldiers and their families.

d. The DRMEW Award is not part of the DA awards program and should not compete with other established awards. Do not use it instead of awards for commendation, meritorious service, or routine departure, or as an interim award while awaiting DA awards.

e. The DRMEW Award is not a short-term or single-event recognition. An individual may receive only one DRMEW Award.

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f. The DRMEW Award selection process will be in three phases (and will correspond with the SAMC selection process outlined in USARAK Reg 215-2, para 1-4):

(1) Phase 1—Nomination. Anyone may nominate an eligible individual through the unit senior non-commissioned officer. The senior noncommissioned officer will screen and evaluate nomination packets before forwarding them to the initial SAMC selection board. Nomination packets will include the individual's identification, documentation of volunteer acts/service, and justification for the nomination.

(2) Phase 2—Sergeant Audie Murphy Club initial selection board. The unit senior noncommissioned officer will forward the nomination packet(s) for review to the unit level initial SAMC selection board. The selected DRMEW Award nomination packets will then be forwarded to the SAMC final selection board.

(3) Phase 3—Sergeant Audie Murphy Club final selection board. The final selection board will review DRMEW Award nomination packets and determine if the volunteer warrants selection for the DRMEW Award. Do not establish quotas. The final selection board need not select candidates if they do not meet required standards. The final selection board keeps the nomination packets of selected volunteers.

g. All levels of review will check nomination packets not meeting required standards for the DRMEW Award to determine what appropriate local recognition there is for the volunteer's contribution(s).

h. Present the DRMEW Award at a local SAMC induction ceremony or other such ceremony corresponding to this level of award.

### 6. Criteria

a. Eligible spouses who have distinguished themselves by outstanding volunteer service contributing to the mission of the Army and to the welfare of the Army family are eligible for nomination for the DRMEW Award.

b. The intent of this award is to recognize those eligible spouses whose volunteer service to our country is often "behind the scenes." Their efforts to improve their communities and enhance the overall military lifestyle marks their way of life.

c. Volunteers should be active members/supporters of a unit family support group or be an individual who actively supports (in a clearly distinguishable manner) a military organization that does not have an organized family support group.

d. The volunteer service must directly benefit soldiers and/or their families or be readily identified as bringing great credit on the Army family. Nomination packets may include volunteer service in the civilian community. Nomination packets *should* include volunteer service in the civilian community if it benefits soldiers and their families.

e. Consider the level of individual sacrifice and dedication. Also consider the merit, quality, and impact of volunteer accomplishments and contributions. There is no requirement for nomination packets to include the length of time spent in a volunteer position or number of volunteer hours but packets may include them. Quality, not quantity, should be the rule.

f. Volunteer service may be to/at several installations/units of assignment.

g. The required number of areas/agencies of volunteer service is one or more.

h. Volunteers must not have received a monetary incentive for acts or contributed services being considered for the DRMEW Award.

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FOR THE COMMANDER

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1 - CSM, United States Army Reserve-Alaska

1 - SGM, United States Army National Guard-Alaska

1 - SGM, Directorate of Plans, Training, Security, and Mobilization

**Appendix A**

**The Biography of Doctor Mary E. Walker**

Mary Walker always stood out in a crowd. She was born 26 November 1832, in Oswego Town, near Oswego, New York. As a child, she was distinguished for her strength of mind and her decision of character. She grew up an independent young woman. She always had an inclination to be useful in the world. A woman of great energy, in her early years she wore "bloomers," the pantaloony-style garb of the radical feminists of the age. When she graduated, the only female in her class, from Syracuse Medical College in 1855, she became one of the few women physicians in the country.

At the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, Doctor Walker, then twenty-nine, journeyed to Washington and applied for an appointment as an Army surgeon, much to the shock of the Medical Department, which rejected her with considerable verbosity. Not one to be discouraged, she stayed in Washington, serving as an unpaid volunteer in various camps and, when the patent office was converted into a hospital, she served as assistant surgeon and worked without pay. During that time, she was instrumental in establishing an organization that aided needy women who came to Washington to visit wounded relatives.

Doctor Walker met with considerable abuse over her persistent demands to be made a surgeon, but also carried considerable respect for her many good works. Meanwhile, she abandoned bloomers and adopted a modified version of male attire, with a calf-length skirt worn over trousers, keeping her hair relatively long and curled so that anyone could know that she was a woman. In November 1862, Walker presented herself at the Virginia headquarters of Major General Ambrose Burnside and was taken on as a field surgeon, although still on a volunteer basis. She treated the wounded at Warrenton and in Fredericksburg in December 1862; almost a year later, she was in Chattanooga tending the casualties of the battle of Chickamauga. After the battle, she again requested a commission as an Army doctor.

In September 1863, Major General George H. Thomas appointed her as an assistant surgeon in the Army of the Cumberland, and she was assigned to the 52d Ohio Regiment, near Chattanooga, Tennessee, a position in which she served well, wearing a somewhat modified version of the standard surgeon's uniform. Many stories were told of her bravery under fire. However, she served in this capacity for but a short time. In April 1864, she was captured by Confederate troops, having remained behind to tend wounded upon a Union retirement. Charged with being a spy and arrested, her male attire constituting the principal evidence against her, Doctor Walker spent 4 months in various prisons, subject to much abuse for her "unladylike" occupation and attire, until she was exchanged for a Confederate surgeon on 12 August 1864. Years later, she took great pride in this "man-for-man" exchange.

In October 1864, Walker was granted a contract by the Medical Department as an acting assistant surgeon. Despite her repeated requests for battlefield duty, she was not again sent into the field. She spent the rest of the war as superintendent at a Louisville, Kentucky, female, prison hospital and a Clarksville, Tennessee, orphanage. Released from government contract at the end of the war, Walker lobbied for a brevet promotion to major for her services. Secretary of War Stanton would not grant the request. President Andrew Johnson asked him if there was some other way to recognize her service. A Medal of Honor was prepared for Walker and presented to her in January 1866; she would wear it every day for the rest of her life.

After the war, Doctor Walker remained active in the women's rights movement, and was a crusader against immorality, alcohol, and tobacco and for clothing and election reform. Among her more unusual positions was that there was no need for a women's suffrage act, as women already had the vote as American citizens. Her taste in clothes caused frequent arrests on such charges as "impersonating a man." At one trial, she asserted her right "to dress as I please in free America on whose tented fields I have served for 4 years in the cause of human freedom." The judge dismissed the case and ordered the police never to arrest Walker on the charge again. She left the courtroom to hearty applause.

In 1916, Congress revised the Medal of Honor standards to include only "actual combat with an enemy." Several months later, in 1917, the Board of Medal Awards, after reviewing the merits of the awardees of

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the Civil War awards, ruled Doctor Walker's Medal, as well as those of 910 other recipients, as unwarranted and it was revoked. She died on 21 February 1919, at the age of eighty-six. But Mary Walker was not forgotten.

Nearly 60 years after her death, at the urging of a descendant, the Army Board for Correction of Military Records reviewed the case. On 19 June 1977, Army Secretary Clifford L. Alexander approved the recommendation by the Army Board for Correction of Military Records, to restore the Medal of Honor to her. Doctor Mary E. Walker remains on record as the sole female recipient of the Medal of Honor.